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Book Reviews.

Introduction to the New Testament. By F. GODET, D.D. Vol. II, The Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles; Division I, The Collection of the Four Gospels, and the Gospel of St. Matthew. Authorized Translation from the French by William Affleck, B.D. New York: Imported by Charles Scribner's Sons. Pp. xii + 272. \$2.50.

We have in this book two chapters of the five which are eventually to constitute the first division of the second volume of the Introduction to the New Testament which the distinguished and venerable scholar of Neuchatel is issuing. The plan of the volume is to deal first of all with the formation of the gospel collection, then with each of the synoptic gospels separately, and only last, in chap. v, with the *relation in origin* of the three. The second division of the volume will be given to the fourth gospel. We believe that Godet is altogether right in postponing the discussion of the synoptic problem till each of the three gospels has been carefully examined *as it stands*. If it is less clear that the discussion of the formation of the gospel collection properly precedes this latter study, there are certainly some practical advantages in this order of treatment.

The question discussed in chap. 1 is whether the church made the gospel collection for the purpose of using it as a weapon against Gnosticism and Montanism, or whether the unique position acquired by these books is to be attributed to the use made of them in the public readings of the different churches, a use itself to be explained by the knowledge which the church had of their apostolic origin. This is a part of the question so sharply debated not long ago by Harnack and Zahn. Godet examines the evidence at great length and comes out in agreement, so far as the gospels are concerned, with Zahn. Whether he is right or wrong, it must be admitted that he greatly weakens his case by his method of defending it. There is too much assertion of what "must have been," too easy assumption of things that demand clear proof. It is one thing, for example, to show the improbability of the view that it was only at the end of the second century that the church selected its books for public reading, and the probability that the decision clearly formulated then (or somewhat earlier) only reflected

an already existing practice, but quite another thing to affirm that at the end of the first century there already existed a gospel collection containing just our present four gospels. The statement (on p. 32) that "the union of our four gospels in a single volume must have taken place, if not under the eyes and with the participation of John, at least a short time after his departure, and with the certainty of his approval," is not sustained by the evidence which Godet advances. It is doubtful whether there is any evidence adequate to sustain it.

Chap. 2, dealing with Matthew's gospel, discusses amply and interestingly its plan, composition, authorship, date, etc. Both on internal and on external grounds Godet is constrained to recognize the distinction between the original Aramaic writing of the apostle Matthew and the Greek canonical gospel. He adds the interesting suggestion that the present gospel is the work of a disciple of Matthew, who sustained a relation to him akin to that of Mark to Peter, and to whom the apostle committed the task of preparing an enlarged Greek edition of his book. For this suggestion, however, he is unable to marshal any convincing evidence. His exposition of the evidence that there are two strata in the book corresponding to the work of the two authors, especially that the five great discourses each reveal a basal discourse to which there have been added elements which are foreign in the sense that, though true words of Jesus, they do not belong to those discourses, is most admirable. He reserves for chap. 5 the discussion of the relation of the gospels to one another, but indicates that he will account for the resemblance of Mark and Matthew, not by the use of one by the other, but by a common dependence on oral tradition. He argues for an early date of the present Greek gospel, 60-66 A. D. The original Aramaic book he assigns to the early part of the sixth decade, maintaining that it was possessed and quoted from by James, Paul, and the author of the Apocalypse. He defends the historical accuracy of the book as we have it in almost all respects, but holds that in respect to the day of the crucifixion it conveys a wrong impression, which John corrects; that the eschatological discourse obscures the distinction between Jesus' words concerning the destruction of the city and his own second coming for judgment; and that in various other minor respects the book as it stands is inaccurate. These inaccuracies are due, of course, to the disciple of Matthew. Chronological order it was no part of its plan to give.

The purpose of the Aramaic book was *didactic*—to preserve the discourses of Jesus treating especially of the kingdom of heaven (p. 183)

as a guide to the church in the work she had to do in the world (p. 198); the aim of the Greek book is apologetic, it being intended to convince unbelievers that Jesus was the Christ. In this latter Godet seems to us to have somewhat seriously missed the mark. In discussing (pp. 168 ff.) the apparently contrary attitudes of the book in reference to the permanence of the law, he approaches what we believe to be the true view, viz., that the aim of the author is, on the basis of the demonstration that Jesus is the Christ, to show that, the Jews having rejected their Messiah, the kingdom has ceased to be Jewish and has become a kingdom for all the world; but after all he fails to grasp it clearly and, when later he comes to state the purpose, misses it altogether. There is, we believe, no evidence that the book was intended for non-Christian Jews.

The section dealing with miracles is unsatisfactory, and that which discusses the supernatural birth would much better have been omitted altogether. The latter, if not also the former, damages a good cause with false distinctions and false assumptions. Even if Godet is right in his premises, as we do not believe he is, it is bad apologetics to defend his conclusions, which we believe to be in the main correct, by arguments which so utterly fail to appeal to men of this generation.

Taken as a whole, this is a book of great strength and of great weakness. The author has learning, imagination, a good degree of insight—though right here, too, he fails at times—and a most attractive style. But he lacks in ability to weigh both sides of a case. Occasionally he grossly misrepresents an opponent's position through failure to understand him (see, *e. g.*, pp. 16, 17). Oftener he understands his opponent's position, but too easily convinces himself that he has demolished it and established his own.

The translation is, in the main, good. But we note a few infelicities and errors. Mr. Affleck has several times used "after" where the sense is evidently "according to;" says "yet seven" for "seven others;" "behind date" for "out of date;" and has a fondness for the expression "in fine" that becomes wearisome to the reader.

E. D. B.

Babylonians and Assyrians: Life and Customs. By PROFESSOR A. H. SAYCE, Oxford University. *Semitic Series*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899. Pp. x+266. \$1.25.

This volume is the first of a series of "Handbooks in Semitics" under the editorship of Professor J. A. Craig, of the University of